

THE HEAVENLY BODIES AND THE WEATHER 7

on gravel and sand, and then waits a whole year. At the expiration of that time he scrapes away the sand and gravel, takes out the star, and brings it to a good swordsmith, who melts and beats it into a saber which can be sold for one hundred Turkish pounds (\$450). 821

If there is lightning and thunder, but the clouds begin to scatter and disappear, the Rwala pray: "O, that he, who sends (angels) to the cloud, may send (an angel) to it on eight riding camels and say to it: 'The gift (of God) shall come down.' *Jā min jirsal las-sahāb jirsal leh tamān ercāb w-jakūl leh 'aṭwa' jiji.*" If merciful Allāh spreads out the clouds on high and but few drops fall, the Bedouins lament: "After this (rain) we have lost what might have brought us gold, (we have lost it) like a vibrating mirage. Truly, we can do nothing without Allāh. *Min 'akbek raddcna-d-dahāb wiṭṭ zahzāh as-sarāb 'akb allāh mā ḥanna šien.*" Abundant rain would have given the camels good pasture: and for well-fed old camels gold can be had from the 'Akejl.

The end of the rain in the daytime is announced by the rainbow, *sejj al-maṣar*. As soon it appears, the clouds grow calm; *ilja anjefat kajjefat*.

SEASONS AND RAINY PERIODS

In summer the clouds are plentiful, but they bring no rain. Only in the autumn there becomes visible either on the right or on the left of the sun a sun dog, *middat al-šams*, a sure sign that rain will soon come. In this season the seer, *ṣāḥab as-sirr*, of the Nsejr clan, Mbārek eben Hwēmel, takes a large handful of salt and, dividing it into six small heaps indicating the principal rains, arranges them in the form of a cross, *salleb*, thus: 821 791 • 787

o *shejldwi*
o *šitwi* o *frāwi* o *sejfi*
o *šōdwi*,

and then lies down by them and waits for what Allāh's messenger will tell him during the coming night. On the next morning he and the others examine the heaps. The one where the most salt is melted is the one which will produce the most abundant rain.

The year of the Bedouins begins with the first heavy rain following the appearance of the star Canopus, *cheil* in 805 132

CHAPTER XIV

SUPERNATURAL GIFTS

SEERS OR SORCERERS

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756 Among the Bedouins there are persons, both male and female, who know and see hidden things and are able to heal the sick. The Rwala call them collectively *al as-sirr* or *as-serrijje*, and individually *ra as-sirr*, a lord (or owner) of secrets, seer, whereas they are known among themselves as *al-lab al-islām*, owners of *islām*, possessing the protection of God. They maintain that they inherit their supernatural qualities, their *islām*, from their forefathers and that, therefore, the ability to heal the sick, discover what is hidden, foretell the future, etc., is confined to certain families. This the Rwala refuse to believe and often deride the seers openly. If, however, both the seer's father and grandfather were also known as seers or sorcerers, then the Bedouins may admit the claim to be justified; but they scoff the more at the men and women who, having joined the seer, begin after some time to claim that they too have been endowed by Allāh with the gifts of *islām*.

The seer maintains that he communicates with an angel, *malak*, who announces to him the will of Allāh. Such an angel, an intermediary between Allāh and the sorcerer, is called *munābbi* or *manābbi*, spokesman. As a rule the *munābbi* appears in the shape of a rider seated on a white mare. He tells the seer what to proclaim in Allāh's name, and woe to him should he say something different from what the angel told him, *ma jāhāi kowā haḥi al-malak*, for the angel would kill him on the spot. The *munābbi* simply says: "O So-and-So, this or that is going to happen; this or that thou wilt proclaim; this or that do!" Besides the angel the seer's ancestors also appear to him in the night between Thursday and Friday, instructing him how to behave. Yet neither the angel nor the ancestors ever appear without a thorough preparation on the part of the seer.

Every seer has his disciples, *ḥallābt as-sirr*, who are taught all the external performances necessary to display if

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791 the *munābi* is to appear. They come to the seer on Thursday
 756 night, accompany him on his visits to the sick and on raids,
 and join him whenever he commands them. One part of their
 duty is to carry little drums and other musical instruments,
 [789] *dfūf w-šūš* or *dirbāš*. If the sorcerer wants to call the spokes-
 man-angel to him, he beckons to the disciples to play, while
 he himself squats with his head bent down. After a while he
 begins to move, stands up, stretches out his hands, jumps
 about, contorts his body, and puts his hands, feet, and even
 his head close to the fire, clapping his hands. The Bedouins
 say of this that he is just playing, *je'ab*, but his disciples
 call it yielding to the influence of the *islām*, ecstasy. When
 his enthusiasm reaches its climax, either Allāh's spokesman
 or some of the seer's ancestors appear on the scene. After
 the climax has subsided, the seer, greatly exhausted, com-
 plains that he can do nothing. The Bedouins, however, who
 cannot be made to believe that this ecstasy is a mere prepa-
 ration for the angel's appearance, deride the sorcerer, imi-
 tate his gestures, and call him one possessed and a juggler.
 Especially those of the new sorcerers whose ancestors were
 not known as seers are the target of their ridicule when
 trying to establish themselves. In this the Kwala are assisted
 by the acknowledged seers themselves, even by the new seer's
 temporary master. The new sorcerer is called *mayāi*, a fool;
mašāf, bereft of reason; *habel*, feeble-minded; *wāš'ek kej-*
farān, full of unbelief; *maš'ūh*, drunk; *ma'rūg*, one possessed,
 etc. Should he declare something as the will of Allāh, all will
 laugh at him, for he could not learn anything from his an-
 cestors who were not seers themselves, and the speaking
 angel does not know him. Yet even if, after all, he achieves
 something extraordinary, they say he was helped by some
 spirit, *šān*, and with such the sorcerers never associate.
 [555] However, by perseverance, patience, and courage a sorcerer-
 to-be in a few years will gain recognition not only from the
 Bedouins but from the hereditary sorcerers as well. The
 advance of such a sorcerer's son in his father's calling is,
 as a matter of course, much easier and speedier.

791 In defense of their honor the seers sometimes resort to
 754 curses. They are unable by their own strength to ruin the
 scoffers, but their ancestors and the spokesman-angel with
 whom they communicate will ask Allāh to punish those who
 dare to persecute them. These will die prematurely, their sons

791 will be slain, their herds perish. The chief Šakr eben Meq-
 754 reb, a famous leader of countless raids, was greatly incensed
 against both the sorcerers and their disciples because of their
 incessant greed and was once heard to say: "Oh, may Allāh
 rid me of you all! If you have enough, you disturb every-
 body's rest by your music and your foolery; if you are hungry,
 there is no being rid of you, you beggars; *low šebe'tu ew-
 dejtū w-low šit'u arzejtu*." On hearing this the insulted sor-
 cerers called a meeting and one of them, Mnāhi eben Dabbār,
 cursed Šakr in the name of all present. A few days later the
 chief was dead.

789 Of the sorcerer's curse the Bedouins stand in much fear.
 If anybody hears that a seer has cursed him, he makes haste
 782 to find the seer and, falling on his face before the powerful
 754 man, crosses his hands behind his back as if fettered and
 says: "I ask the protection of thine ancestor and am willing
 to bring a lawful sacrifice as a gift to him, *ana dāhel 'ala
 geddekom w-ana hāff debihat geddekom mouhebbha mouhebe
 šara'ijje*." The sorcerer answers: "Agreed, it has arrived;
tāmma w-jāmma." The animal selected for the sacrifice is
 killed by the sorcerer at the edge of the tent, with its head
 turned south, while the sorcerer says: "O Allāh, this sacrifice
 is destined for my ancestor." Then he besmears with the
 blood of the sacrificed animal the center pole of the tent and
 the strip which strengthens its roof, *aršēt al-bejt*; the meat
 he and his disciples eat, and the accursed is relieved.

791 At the time when this was written (1909) the following
 persons were recognized as true seers: men: Mnāhi eben Dab-
 bār, Rannām eben Ġel'ūd, Šajjāh eben Ġlejdān, Za'al eben
 'Awwād; women: 'Elba bint Hmezi, Baṭṭa bint 'Awwād, and
 Dlejjil bint Māqi.

787 A sorcerer can give information whether and for how
 791 long it is going to rain; whether a wife will bear a boy or
 a girl; whether the young produced by the mare or camel
 will be a male or a female; whether a raid will succeed, etc.

[726] War expeditions on a large scale are always accompanied
 by a sorcerer who instructs the commander in anything he
 may undertake. The latter asks the sorcerer's advice only on
 occasions when he is at a loss what to do. Then the seer
 stimulates himself with music and works himself into an ec-
 stasy, which helps him hear the angel speak and proclaim
 the will of Allāh.

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Very often a sorcerer is summoned to the bedside of a person who is seriously ill. He comes either with all or a few of his disciples and settles down in the tent as a regular guest. During the day, but especially in the evening, he orders his disciples to play, while he squats by the fire with his head wrapped up and his face in his hands, listening to the music. After a while he begins to contort the upper part of his body, jumps up, seizes a small drum, beats it wildly, circles around the fire, and, dancing around the patient, raps him with the drum on the head and legs; then, throwing the drum aside, he lies above the patient, supporting himself by the feet and hands, breathes into his mouth and nostrils, kneels down, rubs the patient on the breast, stomach, and back, jumps up, dances around, and, then, lying on him again, mumbles unintelligible words. Sometimes he cures the sick person by this process; sometimes the patient dies.

Ṣulhân's little son, Feger, six years old, fell ill. Greatly troubled, the father entreated a sorcerer to cure his child. The seer soon appeared with his wife, and the first thing they did was to lay the boy's head south and his feet north. The woman began to play, while the sorcerer bent down to the fire, waiting for the *islâm* to take hold of him. Then he jumped up, danced, lay on the boy, covering him with his body, breathed on his cheeks, and made curious grimaces, *la'ab 'alejh*, the woman beating a little drum all this time and dancing around them. The boy recovered.

A certain woman was paralyzed for many years and unable to stand on her feet. Finally Mnâhi eben Dabbâr was brought to her and played over her, *la'ab*, for three evenings. On the third evening the sick woman suddenly jumped up and began to dance with him, and was well ever after.

Feger eben Tajjeb of the Mwâhlb clan suffered from gout and was unable to walk, *mâherkal*. On being sent for, the sorcerer stayed with him seven days, played over him every evening, daubed him with his spittle, spat on him — and Feger became well.

The sorcerers are accustomed to sing:

Hala b'ali as-zâni
jâ šejh al-joddâni
w-'ali jâ-bu ḥâni.

Welcome, 'Ali, thou benefactor,
Chief of my ancestors both;
'Ali, thou father of Ḥâni.

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Jā bār jā geddi
hala' b'ezzaddin
jā šejš al-jemin.

O Falcon! O ancestor mine!
Welcome to us, O 'Ezzaddin!
Thou chief powerful.

Hala' bār an-nijje
jā ra' at-šawijje

Welcome to us, thou who well meanest
And knowest what is hidden.

It is even said of the sorceresses that they can disappear from the tent unobserved.

SOOTHSAYERS

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There are people living among the Bedouins, both men and women, who in some inexplicable way are able to tell of hidden things, whether of the past, present, or future. One of their ways is to prophesy from the position of twenty-three objects cast about promiscuously. These objects are: seven round white pebbles, *marwāt*; one small piece of ambergris; one fragment of broken glass, *razāra*; one small piece of a burned brick, *huzrime*; one fragment of a broken glass arm-let, *kuṣmat ma'zad*; five small white sea shells, *hams wa'dāt*; one small piece of sea shell, *misarra*; four date stones, *ṣu-māt*; one small piece of a glass ring such as is worn by mares on their necks, *kuṣmat harāṭ faras*; and one smooth silver ring, *ḥalkat ḥātem fuṣṣa*. The soothsayer, who keeps all these twenty-three objects in a leather pouch, shakes them out on the palm of his hand, throws them down on the carpet, and then begins to prophesy from their relative positions.

Blejḥān related to me: "My little brother, Ġi'ān, went on a raid and did not return for a long time. My heart was sick with longing for him, *u-ḥalbi waġ'ān 'alejh*. So I went to a Hāzmijje (woman of the Hawāzem tribe) soothsayer, *naharī al-ḥaffāfa allī 'endana min al-hawāzem*, and gave her a little tobacco, *'aṣṭak šawijje titen*. She said:

'What brings thee here, O youth? *irēš gājebk jā walad*. Dost thou need something? *'ak para?*'

'I seek a lost camel and want thee to give me the sign, *ana medheb u-abīc tegrobi li bel-fāl*. Taking out from a bag, *mezweḍe*, the pouch with those twenty-three things, she shook them out on her right palm, which she first lifted and then lowered again, threw them, *fašṣatha*, broadcast on the carpet, glanced over them, and then exclaimed:

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"O youth, thou seekest not a she-camel, *ent má mājē'en mādāba*. Thou art troubled about a raider; it is for him thy heart is aching. But be it known to thee that today his heart is calmer than thine, *ḥalbak al-jawm aḥṣa' min ḥalbak*. He will return to thee merry and unwounded, *jagī farḥān mā hu farḥān*."

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"If he returns thus thou shalt get a dress or silk kerchief, *en ḥān ḡā' farḥānen leḥ tawb ḡilla' maktūne*," said I and left, somewhat relieved. And, true enough, five days after this Ḡān came back well and bringing four captured she-camels. Then I gave the soothsayer that silk kerchief."

Ḡowfān eben Sūdān of the Kmuṣa lost a camel, *ḡajja*. He looked for her in the whole neighborhood without result, and, although half of his neighbors knew of his trouble, *ruma-l-ḡabar denuss an-nās*, no one came to him with news of the lost animal. After ten days he finally went to a soothsayer, *ṣarrābt al-fāl*, Boṣra bint 'Orejē by name, of the Hawāzem tribe, and said to her:

"I wish to go on a raid. What sign wilt thou give me?"

The woman raised her hand with the twenty-three objects, lowered it again, threw them broadcast, and after observing them said:

"Why art thou talking of a raid? Thou hast lost a camel; that is what thou desirest to know — nothing of a raid. He cheered with glad tidings. I see thy camel lying behind a stranger in the west." This gave Ḡowfān a clue. He began to inquire what sort of a stranger camped in the western part of the large camp, and found that on that very day a tent had been pitched at the western end by an unknown Rwejlī. Going there he began to search about the tent and at last saw in a neighboring gully his camel, fettered. The soothsayer received a *meḡīdijje* (90 cents) for the welcome news, *bāra*.

A herdsman drove a flock of sheep to water. He drove them back again at sunset, *rābat 'alejha-ḡ-ḡama*, and then let them graze as they pleased. Sitting down not far off, he soon fell asleep from exhaustion, *mām 'anka*. When he woke up in the morning, his flock was gone. He looked all around, shouted for them, but all in vain. Hastening, then, to the owner of the flock, *ḡā' haleh*, he reported what had happened. The owner called all his kin, *haleh*, together and rode with them on horse-

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back through the whole neighborhood, searching for the animals all day, but without avail, 'aḡar. Returning and saddling their camels in the evening, they began a new search, from which they did not return for fifteen days, ḡaṣṣa'as waḡbe (sic), again without finding a single trace of the flock. Then the owner decided to visit a soothsayer. Scattering her twenty-three objects on the ground before him, she said: "Hurry after thy flock with the wind, with the wind! Thou wilt find one half, thou wilt find the other half. Thou wilt find one after another." When the owner asked what was meant by these words, the woman put him off with the remark that she did not know. Returning to his tent, he related to his people what the soothsayer had told him. The air was perfectly quiet at that time, but suddenly a strong wind began to blow from the south-southwest, which gave one of the relatives an idea. "Allāh sends us a leader," said he, "let us follow him." And exactly at noon they set off north-northeast. About the middle of the afternoon, 'aḡar, they found a piece of the skin of the first sheep, which by a mark on its head the owner recognized as belonging to his flock. Before sunset they found the skin of a second and then of a third sheep with the same mark. All three sheep had been torn to pieces by wolves. Greatly fatigued with their long ride, they lay down to sleep. Continuing their search next morning, they found one dead sheep after another until they reached the pasturing ground of the Rfede kin, where they learned that, a few days before, one of their members named Haejni had found seventy-five sheep wandering aimlessly in the vicinity. This was exactly the half of the lost flock, the other half having perished in the meantime.

SUPERNATURAL POWERS OF ŠLEJB WOMEN

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The Rwala also believe that many women of the Šlejb tribe can exercise a good or bad influence. They are said to be able not only to awaken love, but also to smother it; to strengthen and also to destroy the faculty of begetting; to increase as well as to hinder the growth of children; to lengthen and shorten life, etc. No one knows if they have direct connections with evil spirits, but the people are inclined to believe so. Such women are called witches, saḡḡara, although none of them may be directly so called. Should that be proved of any Šubijja, the Rwala would certainly kill her.

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preserve, as some wayfarer or foreign herdsman might easily give warning to the hostile tribe and enable it to lay a trap for the raiders. It is generally the slaves of the prince or commander who overhear the conversation and then relate it to show that they know more than the Rwala themselves.

On the day agreed on they depart in smaller or larger groups either for the commander's tent or the appointed place of rendezvous. A guide familiar with the watering places, *dellil*, is always taken and, whenever possible, a member of the tribe to be attacked as well. This is usually an elderly herdsman who has hired himself out with them; he is sent for by the commander at the last moment before setting out.

The commander is also accompanied on the raid by a seer or sorcerer, *sāheb es-sirr*, to whom Allāh sends dreams in his sleep of a certain significance, *'arṣa ma'ācdijji*. He is asked by the commander: "O So-and-So, didst thou have a dream of such-and-such a significance? *'arṣatk ḡatk*." It is a favorable omen, for instance, if he has dreamed of a mare or a she-camel; if he has kissed a girl, put on a new dress, or eaten dates—all these presage a rich capture of camels. If he has eaten meat in his dream, it means that tents will be captured, together with the kettles in which the meat is boiled. If he has put on a greenish jacket in his dream, *ḡorḡa ḡagra*, the commander will distinguish himself in a duel. If he dreamt that he was standing on a high hill, it is a sure sign that the commander will defeat the enemy decisively. If he has seen regular soldiers attacking the Bedouins, it is a sure sign that a heavy rain will compel the raiders to rest for some time. Of unfavorable significance, *'arṣa šēna*, is a dream in which the sleeping seer sees a wounded, a naked, or a snake-bitten man; or one in which he has his front teeth knocked out; or in which he falls down a well, *wāc'en bel-šēlil*, or is fettered, or holds gold in his hand, or goes blind. But if he puts on a red jacket in his dream, then the commander's blood is sure to flow.

The commander takes care not to meet before his tent any member of the 'Orṣān (Misfortunates) kin of the Kwācbe, of the Flete (Surprised) of the Rwala, of the Bdūr (Oppressed) of the Ešāḡa, or of the Kōūs (Chased Away) of the 'Abdelle, for the names of these kins prove that they possess qualities very unfavorable to any large undertaking, *'arṣathom mā hi zēnc*.

When the commander reaches the place of meeting, the

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